

PASTORAL PRIORITIES IN THE PARISH MINISTRY

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by  
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**DOCTOR OF MINISTRY**

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper to Drew Ann, my friend and wife, for her patient understanding and companionship during this time; to Marie Krempin, my mother, for her guidance and financial assistance which made my education possible; and to all those pastors, people, and parishes that influenced the material of this paper.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		
I.	INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II.	PASTORAL PRIORITIES IN BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE .	15
	THE PREACHING . . . . .	15
	THE TEACHING . . . . .	24
	OTHER TASKS OF THE PARISH MINISTRY . . . .	30
	Priestly activity . . . . .	32
	Pastoral Management . . . . .	33
	Shepherding . . . . .	36
III.	PASTORAL PRIORITIES AND THE REFORMATION . . .	39
IV.	PASTORAL PRIORITIES AND TODAY . . . . .	50
V.	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	67
	BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	72

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study has been to understand the tasks of the parish ministry with a view to their priorities. The main hypothesis of this study has been to show that the task of preaching-teaching is the priority for the parish minister. Other major tasks of the ministry were studied with a view to the Biblical norms. A brief chapter dealt with the conflict of different priorities that were experienced during the Reformation. A final chapter dealt with the problems and possibilities for the pastor in the ordering and execution of the tasks of the ministry for today.

## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

What is the primary task for the parish minister? The answer is preaching-teaching.<sup>1</sup> This is an important question for the graduate of a seminary who faces the existential fear of "what am I supposed to do out there?" It is of course simple for one to enumerate myriads of tasks for those in the parish ministry. It is not so simple to ascertain the priorities. Thus this project began as a practical endeavor to find those tasks of the parish minister that are primary, those tasks that are secondary, and those tasks that are generally delegated.

A well-rounded seminary education equips a theological student with knowledge and skills. This is important. However in the practical setting of the parish, one finds it necessary to focus on certain tasks, or disaster may result. In a typical day a parish minister might be asked to call on the sick, on other parishioners, to counsel a distressed person, attend committee meetings and Bible studies, to plan youth activities, to conduct a wedding rehearsal, etc. Not to mention time needed for teaching and sermon preparation. Not to mention time

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<sup>1</sup>This claim is based on biblical ground. Please see chapter II, pp. 13-27.

needed for family and spouse. Not to mention time needed for oneself. It is my opinion that this diversity of tasks induces role stress which is responsible for many problems in a church and in the personal life of the parish minister. The reason is this: if the pastor spends too much time engaged in those activities which are secondary, if the pastor spends too much time engaged in those activities which really should have been delegated, then obviously there is not enough time left to do those things which are the primary tasks of the ministry. If this is allowed to happen the result is very serious for the Church: the pastor settles into the hectic life of trying to do everything, or takes the other option that very little can be done. In either case the primary tasks of the professional minister are not performed adequately. And consequently the Church is not properly served and nourished.

This study of the priorities for the parish minister intimately affects the life of the congregation. Within the "priesthood of believers" as Luther put it, a healthy church is characterized by parishioners who actively take part in the tasks of the ministry. By way of contrast, an unhealthy church is one that is characterized by parishioners who do not participate, or are not invited to participate, in any significant ministry. Thus two functions of this project are (1) to show how the pastor

can benefit by concentrating on certain tasks of ministry and delegating other tasks, and (2) to show how the parishioners can benefit and be nourished by exercising some tasks of the ministry.

Here is one application: it is a Lutheran tradition that the parish minister spend a sizeable amount of time calling on members of the parish. This is fine for a small congregation. But in a larger congregation this could become very taxing, if not impossible. Calling is one of the tasks of ministry that I have seen benefit from lay participation. This is not to say that a pastor should give up calling, just spread out the responsibility to others in the parish to make calls also! A remarkable thing happens when the laity are invited to use their talents in ministry--they grow and are nourished and in turn free the pastor for other services that also demand his or her attention. It is to this end that this project is directed.

My thesis is this: the parish minister is limited by time to what he or she can do, therefore he or she must concentrate on the priority of the office--which is the preaching-teaching function in the parish. I affirm this priority on the basis of Scripture. This doesn't mean that other functions in the parish are to be neglected. But good management requires that some tasks be minimized, and others delegated. For after all, the parish minister is a



resource to be managed, not wasted. Obviously common sense and good judgment should prevail when deciding what tasks are to be minimized and what tasks are to be delegated. And no two parishes are the same. But it is the thesis of this project that the primary concern of the parish minister is the preaching function. This function can take priority in a multiplicity of denominations. All the main-line churches have the same opportunities even with their many differences.

By way of definition, preaching and teaching are considered as a whole since the two functions today overlap to a great extent. According to C. H. Dodd this was not true in the New Testament when preaching was limited to proclaiming the Gospel, and teaching was reserved for a more detailed instruction of people who were already initiated into Christianity.<sup>2</sup> Robert Worley disagrees with Dodd's theory of the dichotomy between preaching and teaching in the early church however.<sup>3</sup> Anyway, the point is that today this distinction between preaching and teaching is blurred. Much of today's preaching is in the context of a congregation which is already familiar with the Gospel. So much of today's "preaching" really contains

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<sup>2</sup>C.H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1936)

<sup>3</sup>Robert C. Worley, Preaching and Teaching in the Earliest Church (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967)

a lot of teaching. Similarly it is possible in a teaching setting to "preach" the Gospel. So for the purposes of this project, the subject of preaching-teaching is to be considered as a whole.

Other major roles for the parish minister are administration, pastoring, and being a priest. The pastoral administrator simply defined manages the parish. This may mean secretarial work, board meetings, maintenance of physical plant, directing of volunteers, planning, etc. The "pastoral" duties generally include interpersonal relations such as calling, counselling, shepherding, and so forth. The "priestly" duties normally mean leading in the worship service, weddings, funerals, and administration of the sacraments. These then are the major duties of the parish minister.

There is some work previously done in the area of pastoral parish priorities. Lyle Schaller, in a chapter on pastoral priorities discusses how a new pastor might find out what are the priorities from the point of view of a group of leaders in a congregation.<sup>4</sup> Here follows a brief discussion on the mechanics of the process he suggests. The pastor makes a list of pastoral duties ranging from visiting to administration and writes these twelve or so

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<sup>4</sup>Lyle E. Schaller, The Pastor and the People (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973), pp. 45-55.

duties on separate cards. Then a stack of cards containing the twelve or so tasks is handed out to each of the congregational leaders. During a meeting, each leader chooses from these cards what in his or her opinion is the first priority, and reports this to the group. There are differences of opinion among the leaders and discussion results. Then each leader chooses the second most important duty for the minister and so on. So the pastor finds out what the leaders expect of him or her. This is its chief function. The procedure serves as an occasion for the discussion of different views with the possibility of some excellent teaching opportunities. Since it is likely that there will be different opinions, together the minister and people could then study Scripture for some positive direction. After all, do we pick the priorities of the ministry out of a hat, or are there some guidelines for the work of the pastor? Do we use guesswork, personal biases, or is there some larger guiding principle in determining the work of the ministry? I believe that the New Testament has authoritative guidelines for the work of the ministry and will amplify this further in chapter II.

Another way to put the problem is this: who decides how the minister orders his or her priorities, God or the people? Actually, the Bible says both. One cannot do God's will and neglect people. Christians as well as ministers serve God by serving other humans as we see in

Matthew 25:31-46. Of course there are qualifications to this. It is possible to do the will of people and neglect God's will. For example, W. Frend relates a humorous story about a group of people and their expectations. It seems that there were numerous elderly folk who had pegged their priest in the role of full-time visitor and tea-drinker!<sup>5</sup> That was his primary task in their eyes! While this example is an exaggeration, it does point out that there are sometimes strong conflicts between parishioners' expectations of the minister and the minister's own self understanding of ministry. One way of mediating this conflict is with Schaller's procedure for discussing priority differences. And of course this is an excellent time for the illumination of the New Testament in guiding pastor and people.

The problem now is whether or not it is possible to determine what are the priorities of the parish minister. Since the Bible witnesses to the self-revelation of God then there ought to be some clues in it that would help us determine pastoral priorities. Naturally, there are some excellent studies in this field. In the book, The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, John Knox wrote a chapter which gives an overview of the kind of ministry in the

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<sup>5</sup>W.H.C. Frend, "A Professional Tea-drinker?," Modern Churchman, XVII, 3 (April 1974), 171-2.

primitive church. This is an excellent overview of the earliest ministries. More specifically, C.H. Dodd, in his book The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments discusses the primitive preaching found in the New Testament and contrasts this with the primitive teaching. This is a comprehensive statement on the earliest preaching.

There is also a wealth of material which studies the pastoral priorities of today's ministries. One of the most well researched studies of this kind is found in the book Punctured Preconceptions written by Douglas W. Johnson and George W. Cornell. They polled a random sample of 3,450 Christians. Here is one result that applies to this project: people were asked to list in order of importance, the most important things a local church does. Here is what the people listed as the first priority of the local church: "In total, for all areas and groups, the cardinal concern is meditating on the message of Jesus, persuading others to believe and trust his unique authority and way."<sup>6</sup> Clearly this does not come about except through teaching and preaching (see also Rom 10:14,17).

While the church may know its theological purpose, there still are functional problems for the parish minister. For instance, the ministry suffers from excessive role

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<sup>6</sup>Douglas W. Johnson and George W. Cornell, Punctured Preconceptions (New York: Friendship Press, 1972), p. 86.

possibilities. Technically this is known as role ambiguity, practically it is feeling uneasy about the vagueness of the pastoral role. Mark May states the role problem very well:

What is the function of the minister in the modern community? The answer is that it is undefined. . . . The work of the lawyer, the physician, the teacher, the artist, the writer, and the engineer, is clear cut and rather sharply defined (at least in the mind of the average man), so that when a young man chooses one of these professions he has some idea of what he is getting into. But not so with the ministry.<sup>7</sup>

There is more evidence to support this notion. Yoshio Fukuyama in his sociological study, The Ministry in Transition, discovered that the "most pressing" personal decision facing over two thousand ministers and seminarians was this: "the purpose of the church and its ministry."<sup>8</sup> Another way to say the same thing is, what are the priorities? What are we supposed to be doing out there? This is a real problem since there are so very many varieties of tasks in the parish ministry. The sheer weight of the day to day activities impels a minister to prioritize tasks and thereby limit them. But prioritizing tasks is only the first step.

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<sup>7</sup>Mark A. May, The Education of American Ministers (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1934), II, 389.

<sup>8</sup>Yoshio Fukuyama, The Ministry in Transition (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1972), p. 8.

Quite frankly, role ambiguity is the least of the minister's problems. It is one thing to overcome role ambiguity by prioritizing the possible roles of the ministry, it is something else to do priorities. Samuel W. Blizzard calls this "The Minister's Dilemma."<sup>9</sup>

Research . . . suggests that Protestant parish clergymen in the United States face a basic dilemma. The theology they hold and the seminary instruction they received place the roles they perform in the parish in one priority order. But they actually spend most of their time doing those things they feel are least important [italics not in the original]. Denominational goals and programs and local parish needs determine the use of their time. But these activities bring the least satisfaction. Hence the various offices of the ministry are normatively in one order of priority, and functionally in another order of priority [italics not in the original].<sup>10</sup>

Once a set of priorities are chosen, the work is not yet over. The priorities must be implemented.

What is the basis for the inability to execute the priorities of the ministry? Put it this way, there is nothing wrong with denominational programs, parish needs, cultural expectations--except when the sense of divine mission is lost to conflicting human expectations. We must keep in mind that this is God's church, not ours. When we become self-centered rather than God-centered, there will be conflicting human desires which may lead to the

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<sup>9</sup> Samuel W. Blizzard, "The Minister's Dilemma," Christian Century, LXXIII, 17 (April 25, 1956), 508.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

inability to execute the priorities of the ministry. This is when the sense of divine mission becomes replaced with lesser human missions. Apparently this situation is persistent: Blizzard makes the alarming statement that

no matter how different ministers' ideas of what is important in the ministry, all wind up doing substantially the same thing. It is perfectly apparent how largely the social roles of Protestant parish ministers are conditioned and defined by the requests of parishioners, the denominational program and the culture of the community.<sup>11</sup>

The parish minister and church that loses the sense of divine mission charts a very dangerous course. Why? Because the church then suffers mediocrity and purposelessness. In my view this sad state of affairs can be prevented by a clear-cut idea of the priorities of the parish ministry, educating people about the New Testament priorities, and doing them. Otherwise the pastor and the church become a ship without a rudder tossed by the seas and shifting winds of cultural opinion.

I intend to study the priorities of the parish ministry and give a rationale for choosing pastoral priorities (see chapter II). I will draw on work already done in this field both theologically and practically, and suggest possibilities for implementing these priorities.

The scope of this project was limited to the parish

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<sup>11</sup>Blizzard, pp. 509-10.



ministry since other ministries have different priorities (e.g. pastoral counselors, church administrators, chaplains, etc.). That is the first limitation. Since there is some disagreement throughout the history of the church as to what the priorities of the ministry are, I shall only deal with pastoral priority conflicts during the Reformation. Lastly, my thesis for the project was based on selections of the Bible. There was no effort made to deal with exegetical problems with the selected scriptures since that would be beyond the scope and purpose of this project. Rather, the theology of the text was considered and applied to the topic. Those are the theological limitations. The practical limitations are on suggestions for implementing the priorities. For example, delegation is essential to the thesis of this project. I shall not go into the mechanics of how to delegate tasks however. In addition, this study did not deal with the details of preaching or teaching techniques.

This project integrated theological and functional disciplines. The priorities of the parish ministry is a theological question. The possibilities for implementing the priorities, delegation, specialization, and so forth are practical functional problems.

This project used two methods. First my experience as an intern in a parish was used to keep the project realistic and practical. Secondly, there was research in the

Bible, church history, Luther, and current ministry and sociological studies.

Recognized authorities within the area of this project largely confine their studies within the areas of Biblical research (Kittel), sociological studies (Fukuyama), theology (H. Richard Niebuhr), and practical theology (Schaller). Those authorities generally confine their studies to their own area of expertise and do not tend to venture too far in integrating their specialities. For example, H.R. Niebuhr says that the goal of the Church is the "increase among men of the love of God and neighbor."<sup>12</sup> This is a theological, not functional statement. This project aims to integrate the theological with the practical to give a usable overview of the subject of pastoral priorities.

Briefly follows a chapter by chapter outline. Chapter two deals with selections of the Holy Scriptures as they relate to the subject of pastoral priorities. It is a theological chapter taking New Testament texts at face value since exegetical problems such as authorship and so forth do not apply to the purpose of the study. Preaching, teaching, priestly activities, etc. were studied in detail as they were utilized in the ministries of Jesus and Paul.

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<sup>12</sup>H. Richard Niebuhr, The Purpose of The Church and its Ministry (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1965), p. 31.

Then a brief chapter discussed the Reformation and Luther. Church history is important because it shows us how another period understood itself in relation to the Bible and in turn provides us with a transition to the present age. The Reformation was a particularly useful period because it provides us with a look at two very different viewpoints of pastoral priorities. The Catholic Church and Luther were briefly studied as they relate to the subject. Chapter four dealt with pastoral priorities for ministry today. The purpose of this chapter was to show that role problems of the ministry can be helped with a clear idea of the priorities and also some suggestions for implementing these priorities. It drew on previous chapters and integrated the theological and practical disciplines with some concrete suggestions. Finally, the last chapter is Summary and Conclusions.

## Chapter II

### PASTORAL PRIORITIES IN BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Jesus' great commission found in Matthew 28:18-20 commands all who would be followers of Christ to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations . . . ." From this commission came all of the varieties of ministries mentioned by Paul. It gave the divine direction for all subsequent ministries. Today the Church and all its ministers take as their point of departure in their individual ministries this divine imperative to make disciples . . . . How this imperative was accomplished in the past can be seen in the Holy Scriptures. The Bible records the traditional methods for carrying out the divine priority. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss these tasks.

### THE PREACHING

It is very helpful to look at the ministry of Jesus to begin with. One often wonders what the priorities of His ministry were, since that should have some bearing on all other ministries. The study of Jesus' priorities does indeed shed some very helpful light on the subject of pastoral priorities. As the New Testament records, Jesus came preaching the good news to all: "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also: for that is why

I came out. And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues . . ." (Mk. 1:38-39). Here "Jesus describes preaching as His task on earth. He has come from the Father to men in order to proclaim the message. This is His mission . . . ." <sup>1</sup> Thus one of Jesus' priorities was to preach. But it would be mistaken to think that Jesus' preaching was simply a task of His ministry, to be prioritized along with other tasks. Why? Because it would be mistaken to think that Jesus' preaching was simply discourse about a subject, mere words. For Jesus, "preaching" had a far more profound meaning. John goes as far as to say that Jesus is the Word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Jesus' preaching is the Word of God. Likewise today, true preaching is the Word of God. Granted it is spoken by a human, yet there is the divine connection:

He is present in the word of His messengers, so that preaching is both the Word of God and the word of man, as Jesus, too, is very God and very man. Hence true proclamation is not just speaking about Christ. It is Christ's own speaking. Did He not say to His disciples: "He that heareth you heareth me" (Lk. 10:16)? . . . Because God Himself speaks in preaching, a correct reproduction of the NT message is not proclamation by a long way. The impartation of the word of the NT must become an act of God. This takes place when He speaks.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Gerhard Friedrich, "κηρύσσω," in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (1976), III, 708.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

So when we preach today, it is in a sense Jesus who is preaching. This is a rather serious and awesome responsibility for the preacher today!

Preaching for Jesus was more than content, it was the proclamation of an event.<sup>3</sup> It was more than a pastoral priority, it was a God-happening. Jesus' preaching was more than words, it was the Word in action. "The word proclaimed is a divine Word, and as such it is an effective force which created what it proclaims. Hence preaching is no mere impartation of facts. It is event. What is proclaimed takes place."<sup>4</sup> What takes place? Salvation, redemption, the coming of the Kingdom of God is what takes place. This is why preaching is a priority of the parish minister, for obviously there is no preaching without a preacher. If there is no preacher then the activity of God through preaching is hindered. And this is serious because God has chosen this method as a primary medium for communicating Himself: "And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14) The desired goal in preaching is the action of the Word of God on the listener: faith. "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). So for both Jesus and ministers today, preaching is central to

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 710.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 711.

the ministry, it is not just a priority, it is not an option. No preaching, no disciples. And the Great Commission fails to be carried out.

The Word must be preached. It is not enough to have the Holy Scriptures. The Bible doesn't preach. The Word of God is not ink on a page. That innocuous Bible placed by the Gideons in the hotel room may be handy, but it is insufficient by itself. Shipping Bibles all over the world is great, but it is insufficient. Why?

you cannot convert someone to Christian faith by loving him or by the example of a Christ-like life alone. At some point there must be testimony to the historical events as the revealing and saving acts of God.<sup>5</sup>

The point is that "it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe" (I Co. 1:21). This is why the Word must be preached, not left static in a Bible. Unless the Gospel message is proclaimed, how can anyone know about it? Besides, "God does not send books to men; He sends messengers."<sup>6</sup> God sent his son to preach the good news to all humanity. As Jesus preached, so ministers must preach in His place.

In Mark 16:15 we find Jesus' commissioning of his disciples to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation." This commissioning aspect is very

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<sup>5</sup>Owen C. Thomas, Introduction to Theology (Cambridge: Greeno, Hadden, 1972), p. 27.

<sup>6</sup>Friedrich, p. 712.

important. It gives divine authority to the necessity of preaching the gospel. And Jesus' commissioning to preach the gospel not only says that ministers must preach, but it dictates the content of what is preached. This is inherent in the idea of being sent by God. One does not go out to preach one's own gospel and opinions but the Gospel of Him who sends.

The disciples do not proclaim their own discoveries or insights. They proclaim what they have heard from another, and what they have been commissioned to tell, Mt. 10:27. A preacher is not a reporter who recounts his own experiences. He is the agent of someone higher whose will he loudly and clearly makes known to the public. Without calling and sending preaching is a self-contradiction and even a deception. . . . If there is no sending, the preaching of Christ is propaganda, not mission.<sup>7</sup>

Preachers are sent by God to preach the Gospel of God, not their own propaganda. This means by the way that "sermons" which are all psychological theory, partisan politics, opinions on social action programs, etc. belong in the editorial column and not the pulpit.

What is the subject of preaching? The New Testament uses various phrases which describe the subject of preaching.

In the Synoptic Gospels we read of "preaching the Kingdom of God," whether the reference is to Jesus or to His followers. In the Pauline epistles we commonly read of "preaching Christ." In the Acts of the Apostles both forms of expression are used. The apostles

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<sup>7</sup>Friderich, p. 713.



preach "Jesus" or "Christ," or they preach "the kingdom of God."<sup>8</sup>

The Pauline kerygma elaborates a good deal on these themes, and gives us an idea about what the earliest subject matter was. There are however limitations to the amount of information we can glean from the Biblical record. C.H. Dodd says that "the kerygma as we have recovered it from the Pauline epistles is fragmentary."<sup>9</sup> He has however reconstructed a general outline of Paul's kerygma:

The prophecies are fulfilled, and the new Age is inaugurated by the coming of Christ.  
 He was born of the seed of David.  
 He died according to the Scriptures, to deliver us out of the present evil age.  
 He was buried.  
 He rose on the third day according to the Scriptures.  
 He is exalted at the right hand of God, as Son of God and Lord of quick and dead.  
 He will come again as Judge and Saviour of men.<sup>10</sup>

This is the most basic reconstruction and Dodd admits that the earliest preaching of Paul in all likelihood contained more.<sup>11</sup>

So far we have seen that Jesus preached the Word of God, he sent ministers to preach His Gospel, and ministers today preach the Word of God to make it active in the hearers. But what is the desired outcome of preaching, what is the goal in the listener? "The goal of

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<sup>8</sup> C.H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1936), p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 17

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

proclamation in the hearers is faith rather than understanding, IC. 2:4 f. Jesus does not bring a new doctrine which claims the intellect. He brings a message which demands faith."<sup>12</sup> And as Paul said in the Letter to the Romans, faith comes from hearing the preaching of Christ (Rom. 10:17). This then is the desired outcome of preaching: faith in the hearers.

The last theme that needs to be discussed about preaching is Paul's warnings to other preachers. He admonished his fellow pastor Timothy to "preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching (2 Tim. 4:2). He knew from experience that the Word of God is not an easy thing to hear. All ministers who are sent from God to preach the Word must do so knowing very well that there will be seasons when their preaching will be "out of season" and undesirable to the point of view of the listeners. There would be times when people would want teachers who could tickle their ears with what they wanted to hear, not necessarily the Word of God (2 Tim. 4:3). Paul knew that this would lead to conflict and tension. Yet the priority to preach the Word was still there. As Paul said about his own preaching, "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (I Co. 9:16) He had to preach the

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<sup>12</sup>Friedrich, p. 712.

gospel--and if he had preached to please listeners he would have been a false teacher. In Galatians 1:10, Paul was a servant of Christ who did not try to please people. Rather, the role of servant is to please God. This God-priority is a very important guideline for preachers--because there is always the pressure to preach what people like to hear--to merely entertain, and consequently compromise the Gospel.

Paul's other warning is the urgency of ministry. He makes it clear in his letter to the Ephesians that the "days are evil" and ministers have to "make the most of the time" (Eph. 5:16). Preachers have only a limited amount of time. Time limits a preacher in two ways. Obviously there is the limit of lifespan. Yet there is the eschatological time limit to preaching. That is to say there is a certain urgency in the Christian view of time. As Jesus preached the Good News, He also preached the coming judgment. When this would come only the Father knows. As Christ speaks through true preaching, He is asking for an urgent decision of repentance and obedience.

This discussion is not meant to suggest that preaching is the sole domain of the ordained ministry. It is certainly important that all Christians witness to the unchurched. And true preaching enables others to "preach" informally. The pastor must not do this task alone since evangelism is the responsibility of all. For maximum effect, it is important that all Christians "preach" the

Gospel, i.e., explain to all people that Christ died for our sins on a cross and eternal life is through faith in Him. So in one sense, preaching belongs to all Christians.

In another sense, preaching is the responsibility of ordained clergy. The Biblical pattern for the preaching ministry is that some, not all, are called to preach in public. "Not every Christian is called to preach. In the lifetime of Jesus only the innermost circle is given this commission (Mt. 10:7 par. Lk. 9:2, Mk. 3:14)."<sup>13</sup> Public preaching was a special office. The pastoral epistles point out this connection between ordination and preaching. "The pastoral epistles repeatedly link ordination with the work of proclamation--'For this gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher.'"<sup>14</sup> Besides this Biblical reason for limiting public preaching to appointed individuals, there is a pragmatic reason for doing so. A pastor has specific priorities for the sake of order and efficiency in the church. One of these tasks is preaching.

To reserve these tasks to those orderly appointed to discharge them under Christ deprives the layman of no dignity; rather it guards against the casual assumption of ministerial responsibility by private parties whom the church has not declared qualified to act in its name.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 712.

<sup>14</sup>Ronald E. Osborn, In Christ's Place (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1967), p. 220.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 248.

For these reasons preaching is a task normally designated to professional ministers, even though all Christians have the responsibility to preach informally.

To summarize this section on preaching, we have seen that Jesus came preaching the Word. All true preaching in a sense is Jesus' preaching. We have seen that this Word of God is a force actualized by preaching, hence the necessity of preaching. God sends ministers to preach His Word so that all might believe and actualize the force of the Word. The desired outcome of preaching is faith in the hearers. The responsibility to preach is given informally to all Christians, yet formally to the ordained ministry. And lastly, there is an urgency to preach and respond to the Word.

### THE TEACHING

The thesis of this project is that preaching and teaching are two functions of the parish ministry which are essential and most important to the pastor. The reason for the importance of preaching is apparent. "That message, with all that it implies, marks the only difference between ourselves as Christians and all the world's people to whom he sends us."<sup>16</sup> Not only that, but preaching leads to faith in the hearers. Yet the importance of teaching is

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

not so apparent. It has a crucial relationship with preaching. The two go together. For example, in the New Testament we see that Paul did not just preach the Gospel or evangelize and move on to a new town. No, he often stayed to found a church. He then taught people so that they could mature in the faith for the subsequent ministry of the Church. Consider the church at Corinth. According to Acts, Paul preached at Corinth and founded the church there. He taught them for a year and six months (Acts 18:11). Thereupon he left and later found out that they needed more teaching, to say the least. The church at Corinth had fallen into "carnality" and so Paul continued his teaching in his letters. The point is, perfecting the saints takes more than evangelizing. It takes constant teaching. Paul knew that constant teaching was an essential complement of preaching. His advice to Timothy in 2 Tim. 4:2 was this: "preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching." So teaching is a necessary part of preaching. It is a priority of the ministry.

The purpose of preaching is faith and salvation. What is the purpose of teaching? The goal of teaching is to build up the church. It is like a chain reaction. First people are led to Christ, making them disciples in preparation for their own ministry. Then in ever widening circles, the message is carried to others, who in turn are

enabled to take the Gospel message to even more people. Teaching is how the Church is built up. As Paul wrote to Timothy, "what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). The goal is the constant reproduction of mature teachers for the building up of the "body" of Christ.

This teaching is hard work. Solid preparation is needed to prevent each Sunday from becoming a boring repetition of basics--both in preaching and teaching. It takes study to teach. As Paul said to Timothy "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). Thorough study which leads to solid teaching feeds deep spiritual needs of people. People want to learn the full richness of the Word of God. So they need more than the basics and hunger for the deeper mysteries of God which can be taught. Therefore it is very harmful to preach and teach the same general message every Sunday. For example, you can not serve people the same meal every day or they quickly become bored (and sick). Likewise in the church, people who hear the same basic fare Sunday after Sunday quickly become bored and fail to grow spiritually. How can we prevent this from happening? The pastor and teachers need to know the importance of constant study--to be delving in beyond the surface. This

detailed study must not neglect newcomers who may not be able to understand and digest much beyond the basics of Christianity. There has to be a balance between Christian basics and complexities, spiritual "milk" and "solid food." This is so as not to penalize those mature in the faith or those new to the faith. The pastor and teachers must speak to people at whatever level they may be and build them up from there. As Paul dealt with the Corinthians, "I fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it . . ." (I Co. 2:2).

How is teaching "solid food" important in the life of the Church? Why is sound teaching a responsibility and priority of pastoral leadership? Because people will never function on principles they do not know--they have to be taught. People need to know the rules of the "game" before they can become valuable members of God's "team." The pastor-teacher and leaders have a responsibility to build up the "team." And what a responsibility! "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, for you know that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness" (James 3:1).

Teaching obviously is not a light responsibility. Teaching is a priority of the parish ministry. It was also a priority in Jesus' ministry. "According to the unanimous witness of the Gospels didaskain was one of the most



prominent functions of Jesus in his public ministry."<sup>17</sup>

The pastor today must also insure that teaching is one of his or her priorities. Unfortunately, since there is so much time needed for proper preparation, study and teaching are often sacrificed. Constant demands on the pastor's work day shatter the time needed for teaching preparation. That is why it needs to be seen that teaching is a priority. Otherwise other less important demands on the pastor's time come into prominence and the priority to teach becomes by default a secondary or delegated task.

Question: can the pastor delegate the teaching task? Certainly! That is the whole idea of building up the church and its teachers, so that even more can be taught. But the pastor still has a responsibility to teach. For how can the pastor preach and not teach? It is certainly possible to preach the basics Sunday after Sunday, but as was mentioned this stunts growth. It also leaves people ignorant and therefore susceptible to all sorts of human errors which cause strife and division. The whole purpose of teaching is that the saints might be equipped to minister to others in the unity of the "body" of Christ. The pastor cannot do the work of ministry alone without the "body of Christ." Rather, the strength is in

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<sup>17</sup>Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, "διδάσκω," in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (1973), II, 139.

the whole "body." And it must be unified with sound teaching. Paul states this aptly in Ephesians 4:11-16:

And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.

Notice here that pastors and teachers do not refer to two different types of people, they stand for the same individual.<sup>18</sup> Likewise today, a true pastor is also a teacher. Also notice that the pastor-teachers equip the saints so that they can do the work of the ministry and build up the body of Christ. Indeed, the Biblical pattern is that the pastor should not try to do everything! In short, the job of the pastor is to teach the saints to do their job.

In summary, teaching is the way to build up Christians so that they can teach and minister to others. The best teaching contains both "milk" and "solid food" to build up both new and mature Christians. Since it is so essential to the life of the Church and the building up of

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<sup>18</sup>J. Jeremias, "ποιμήν," in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (1975), VI, 497.

the saints, it is a priority today. This is because people will not operate on principles they do not know.

#### OTHER TASKS OF THE PARISH MINISTRY

So far we have seen that preaching and teaching are the priorities of the parish minister. This is not to suggest that other tasks of ministry are optional or less important in the life of the Church. It is simply to say that for the pastor, there are certain Biblical priorities. And these priorities ought not to be derailed by tasks that others can share in. Indeed there are many tasks of ministry that are best suited for all Christians, such as evangelism. As there are so many kinds of ministries, some specialization and delegation is the logical choice for the parish minister. However it must be stressed that pastoral specialization is effective only if all the varieties of ministries are performed. It is the "body" of Christ that makes up the ministry of the Church, not an arm here or a finger there. The "body" works together as a whole and not as parts separately. Another way of saying the same thing is that the pastor cannot concentrate on preaching and teaching if the rest of the members in a local assembly are not educated to take responsibility for total ministry. It is the responsibility of the pastor to educate, along with the Holy Spirit. It is the team effort that makes a strong ministry. If anything, the thesis of this project supports

a well-rounded ministry as opposed to a narrowly conceived idea of parish ministry. History is replete with examples when the Church conceived of herself in narrow functions with very debilitating results. Rather, a wholistic effort is the best pattern for group ministry.

A useful analogy is the field of medicine. In the past, medical doctors generally were involved as general practitioners and gave excellent service in just about any area. But as times changed, more and more knowledge increased so that it became necessary for doctors to specialize. The result of this is that we have much better service for some very complex human diseases. The field of medicine is just too complex for one person to do everything. And when you need to go to a hospital, there you find a plethora of specialists, nurses, aids, technicians, custodians, etc. All these people work together to provide excellent overall service. The same thing holds true for the Church. When everyone is using his or her gifts for the building up of the "body" of Christ, there is much more power and service than when a pastor is trying to do everything. Every member of the "body" has his or her own specialty or gift. The parish minister specializes in preaching and teaching. This is not to downgrade other areas of ministry, except to say that preaching and teaching will take up a major portion of time. This ordering of priorities is meant to be "preventive medicine" for the

minister, to keep from becoming bogged down in the wrong priorities (like administration). What follows are some other tasks of ministry which are built on the priorities of preaching and teaching, and generally they should not take excessive time investment of the pastor.

### Priestly activity

What does the Bible have to say about this task? The priest in the OT is seen as one who mediates between God and people, especially the high priest. "By bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on his breastplate when he goes into the sanctuary, he represents the people as a whole (Exod. 28:29)."<sup>19</sup> In the NT and particularly the Letter to the Hebrews, Jesus assumes this role as a perfect, eternal mediator between God and humans. The work of OT priests was quickly applied to all Christians since after Jesus there was no need for a special class of priests to mediate between people and God. As a matter of fact, "in no instance . . . does any NT writer ascribe the title of priest to any individual member or order of ministry in the church."<sup>20</sup> For this reason, priestly activity takes a very minor portion of the minister's time.

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<sup>19</sup>R. Abba, "Priests and Levites," in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (1962), III, 877.

<sup>20</sup>M.H. Shepherd, Jr., "Priests in the NT," in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (1962), III, 890.

The priestly activity the pastor does engage in is for the purpose of church order. This is one reason why a Lutheran pastor does most of the priestly activities such as presiding over the Eucharist, baptizing, etc. Of course in an emergency, there is certainly no Biblical reason why any Christian cannot preside over the Eucharist, baptize, etc. But for the sake of order in the Church there are ordained people who specialize in priestly activity.<sup>21</sup> This varies from denomination to denomination. The point is that priestly activities in general make few demands on a pastor's time, unlike other activities such as parish management.

#### Pastoral Management

This is perhaps one of the most time-consuming tasks of a parish minister. Recent studies<sup>22</sup> and experience teaches that this is one of the most serious problem areas for the pastor. Why? Many pastors feel helplessly burdened and frustrated because they are unable to accomplish what they believe are more important tasks. Luckily for us, the Bible has much to say about this subject! We of this "modern" age might be surprised to learn that

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<sup>21</sup>Osborn, pp. 276-280.

<sup>22</sup>Yoshio Fukuyama, The Ministry in Transition (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1972), pp. 12-13.

people of the early church faced many serious management problems too; much more than are commonly realized!

We are likely to suppose that the administrative work required in a first-century church was much more simple than in a modern congregation of the same size. But this supposition is probably mistaken. When a first-century Jew or pagan decided to become a Christian, he became dependent upon a new community for the supplying of all his needs in a way which the modern Christian, at any rate within the West, can scarcely imagine. . . . and as congregations grew larger, as they rapidly did, the "business" of the church would become correspondingly more difficult and complex. . . . 23

Thankfully, the New Testament records some guidelines that are very helpful for parish managers today.

Perhaps the very first place to begin with is I Tim. 3:4. This may sound trivial, but if a pastor is to be a good manager of a parish, he or she must first be a good manager of his or her household. "He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way; for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church?" This area of household management is perhaps one of the most easily overlooked areas in parish ministry. Household management sounds trite when compared to the "importance" of managing a church, but this is deceptive. For the married pastor, especially one with a family,

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<sup>23</sup>John Knox, "The Ministry in the Primitive Church," in H.R. Niebuhr (ed.) The Ministry in Historical Perspectives (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), p. 12.

Christ is glorified best through a harmonious family. The family is the pastor's first personal priority, then after this comes the church.

Once the parish minister understands the priority to the family, then there is the freedom to forge ahead with parish management. This is one area where delegation is especially important. In some of the largest parishes in the country, management is wholly delegated! The main minister primarily preaches! Churches of this sort generally have more than one pastor which makes it possible for specialized areas of ministry. For example, one pastor may be in charge of preaching, one of youth ministry, etc. This specialization is helpful in these large cases. But they are unusual. Anyway, even if management can be wholly delegated it is wise for the pastor/s to keep in touch with what's going on. Whether or not there is more than one pastor, there are always elders and deacons who should share some of the parish responsibilities. An example is Acts 6 where the twelve decided that they would have to give up preaching the word of God unless they assigned others to serve tables. So they rightly chose seven men to do that task. By way of practical application of a similar management function today, this means that the parish minister better have someone else set up chairs and do the custodial chores on Saturday. Otherwise this cuts into time needed for sermon preparation. Custodial tasks



are an example of a parish task that ought to be wholly delegated (except in an odd circumstance.) This is not to imply that a minister is above these tasks, only that he or she must not let them loom too large in time consumption.

### Shepherding

"Shepherding" is a convenient general term to use for activities such as calling, counseling, and so forth. This is the interpersonal relationship area of the pastoral ministry. One example is visitation. Today's practice of calling on parishioners perhaps derives from Jesus' injunction to welcome strangers, visit the sick and those in prison (Mt. 25:35-36). This injunction is addressed to all Christians, yet the pastor often does all the calling. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that a pastor must do all of the calling. It is a Christian responsibility of all. That is the meaning of Matthew 25:31-46. For when a Christian calls or helps another, it is the same as helping the Lord Jesus! Not to do so is very serious! So it is the responsibility of all Christians to call on others. What this means for the parish minister is that he or she does not have to do everyone else's calling besides his or her own. Therefore calling is a partially delegated task for the parish minister.

Another example of a shepherding task is that of pastoral counseling. This is very important. A great deal

of the New Testament is dealing with counseling, even though the name "counseling" never comes up. There are many examples but space limits. In John 13:34, Jesus gives his disciples a new commandment: to love one another. This is certainly a Christian ideal. It is also a goal of counseling. As Howard Clinebell wrote, "Counseling aims at helping a person increase his ability to love God, his neighbor, and himself more fully."<sup>24</sup> Obviously this is very important in the life of the church, and much more could be said about counseling, the Bible, and implications for the parish minister. Suffice it to say that counseling is a partially delegated task. Why? The pastor must limit the time needed for counseling to be able to adequately manage the rest of the parish work. Howard Clinebell writes that "Most pastors cannot counsel more than five to ten hours per week without neglecting other important duties."<sup>25</sup> Therefore counseling must be limited and partially delegated. He suggests short-term counseling and referrals.<sup>26</sup> Not only that, but group counseling is recommended: "much of the pastoral counseling now done individually could be done more effectively in small

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<sup>24</sup>Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 46.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

groups."<sup>27</sup> The upshot of all this is that it is more efficient to partially delegate the task of counseling, not to mention referral to specialized counselors such as social workers, psychotherapists, etc. Therefore counseling is a partially delegated task of the parish minister. This study ends with the conclusion that both calling and counseling are partially delegated tasks for the parish minister.

One final point, the shepherding feature of the ministry is that area which serves people. To a very real extent people and their needs are a priority for the parish minister. Jesus said in Matthew 25:40 "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." God has chosen the method for serving him is to be through the service of our fellows. That means everyone of whatever class, race, religion, etc. So besides the basic tasks of ministry that have been studied so far, there remains a priority of service to all humans. Individuals and their needs are always different and therefore do not lend themselves to a study of this kind. Yet let it be carefully noted that people are a definite priority in service for the parish minister.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 206-7.

### Chapter III

#### PASTORAL PRIORITIES AND THE REFORMATION

Among the most serious differences faced by the Church in the Reformation was the issue of pastoral priorities. The differences on this point can throw some helpful light on our study. So at the risk of oversimplification, this chapter deals with the differences in pastoral priorities between the Roman Church and the theology of Martin Luther. This chapter serves as a sample of one period in the long history of the Christian Church, when the contrast between the understanding of pastoral priorities was most graphic and instructive for us.

It is recognized that a void of over a thousand years exists between the period of the Early Church and the Reformation. Across this period of time, many differences regarding pastoral priorities had arisen. Different periods and places had their own emphases which grew out of tradition and the needs and practices of the people. During the Reformation period, the Roman Church had one perspective on the task of the minister which contrasted with the perspective of the Reformers. Simply put, the Roman Church understood the priority of the ministry of the priests to be administration of the sacraments, whereas the Reformer's priority was the preaching of the Word. This of course is an oversimplification of the differences.

For example,

Few exponents of the priestly idea want to confine priestly activity to the administration of the central sacrament, just as few Reformers understand the preaching minister as solely a preacher. The priest exercises "the ministry of the word," says Pope Pius XI. . . . But in all his acts he serves the purpose chiefly served in the administration of the sacrament--the purpose of mediating between God and man.<sup>1</sup>

While there were no black and white differences between the Roman Church's idea of ministry and the Reformation's idea of ministry, there certainly were observable differences in their views of pastoral priorities. The ministry of the Word for the Roman Church was primarily a "priestly" activity (administration of the sacrament) whereas the reformers stressed the priority of preaching and teaching the Word. This is the activity on which all other tasks of ministry depend:

Mostly the functions of a priest are these: to teach, to preach and proclaim the Word of God, to baptize, to consecrate or administer the Eucharist, to bind and loose sins, to pray for others, to sacrifice, and to judge of all doctrine and spirits. Certainly these are splendid and royal duties. But the first and foremost of all on which everything else depends, is the teaching of the Word of God [italics not in the original].<sup>2</sup>

There are perhaps many reasons why Luther insisted on the importance of the Word. To begin with, his scholarly background as a Doctor of Theology and Professor

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<sup>1</sup>H.R. Niebuhr, The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1965), p. 62.

<sup>2</sup>Martin Luther, Works (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), XL, 21.

of Bible influenced his attention to the Word. "In the doctorate the Church had imposed upon him the duty of expounding the Scriptures, not only in Wittenberg but to all Christendom . . . ." <sup>3</sup> It was his task as a scholar to study and teach on this subject. This was in connection with the scholarly resurgence of his time. The Reformation grew out of this resurgence of scholarly learning. For example, Luther's Theses on indulgences were meant to be a "gentlemanly academic debate." <sup>4</sup> For "In its origins the Reformation was a learned movement, an academic affair, a scandal in a university, begun by a professor and spread by his colleagues and students." <sup>5</sup> So this is one reason why Luther asserted the importance of the Word, it was part of his task as a scholar in the resurgence of learning in the Reformation. He was a child of his times, and his thinking and scholarly writing confirmed this.

Yet there was a difference with Luther and the values of the times. This difference was due to his spiritual quest. One of the things that bothered him was his personal spiritual problems. He grew up in a church that provided a richly developed worship system yet something was lacking. Luther was always troubled with the

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<sup>3</sup>E. Harris Harbison, The Christian Scholar (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), p. 124.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 112-113. <sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

problem of faith and good works. To make a long story short, he eventually made an accidental "discovery" in his study of the Epistle to the Romans in which he recovered the truth that we are saved by faith in God and not by our works. Luther began to realize a glaring lack in the Roman Church--the basis of sound theology built on the Scriptures. This was to be a primary reason for Luther's affirmation of the importance of the Word as the foundation for all tasks of the ministry.

Luther became aware of the lack of preaching and specifically Biblical preaching in church. The little preaching there was did not help him. For example, he was not at all helped by the usual fare of "long and often fabulous stories about saints and martyrs, and accounts of miracles, . . . passages from Aristotle and Seneca, . . . ." <sup>6</sup> He was helped through his own agonizing, personal study of the Bible. This is one reason why Luther was led to affirm the central importance of the Word over human tradition and worldly theology. He knew this was the one thing that would help other struggling people. This eventually led him to make available to the German common people a Bible translation in their own language. For once Luther understood his role in the Reformation, he poured his time and energy into making the Word available to the

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<sup>6</sup> John A. Broadus, History of Preaching (New York: Armstrong, 1889), p. 114.

largest number of people. The Gospel needed to be heard in a land where it had largely been silent. To summarize:

Most priests were theologically illiterate and could not possibly preach. Most laymen in smaller churches went for months and years without hearing a sermon until a wandering friar came by. This denied them the chief means of access to the Bible. When the Scriptures were translated and read in the parish churches by the Reformers, the people came in crowds to stand and listen to this strange new book.<sup>7</sup>

Subsequent Protestant development owed a great deal to Luther's translations and theological writings.

One of Luther's major contributions to the area of theological education was his preparation of Catechisms. In these he set forth the priority of the Word. The Small Catechism was intended to be for the instruction of common folk in households and children. Luther took this instruction very seriously:

urge governing authorities and parents to rule wisely and educate their children. They must be shown that they are obliged to do so, and that they are guilty of damnable sin if they do not do so, for by such neglect they undermine and lay waste both the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world and are the worst enemies of God and man.<sup>8</sup>

The Large Catechism was intended for theological instruction of the clergy particularly, and Luther also took it very seriously. He had a very low view of pastors who

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<sup>7</sup>James Nichols, Corporate Worship in the Reformed Tradition (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), p. 17.

<sup>8</sup>Martin Luther, "Small Catechism," in Theodore G. Tappert (ed.) The Book of Concord (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 340.



neglected study, saying that "Such shameful gluttons and servants of their bellies would make better swineherds or dogkeepers than spiritual guides and pastors."<sup>9</sup> Luther was not one to take the Gospel lightly. The reason? Here is one he offers: "Nothing is so effectual against the devil, the world, the flesh, and all evil thoughts as to occupy oneself with the Word of God, talk about it, and meditate on it."<sup>10</sup> The Catechisms were intended to set forth the bare minimum of knowledge that was needed to properly call oneself a Christian. They covered such areas as the Ten Commandments, Apostle's Creed, the Lord's Prayer, etc. Such was Luther's commitment to study and proclamation of the Word of God in theological education. Luther knew from his own spiritual struggles the importance of a sound theological education for Christians. That was a major reason for his emphasis on teaching and preaching the Word.

People were ready to grow in spiritual stature. The first people to respond to Luther's understanding of Christianity were his students at the college in Wittenberg. This resurgence of interest in theology spread outward from academia into the neighborhood churches. And the task of communicating this reformed understanding of Christianity fell to preachers and teachers. The goal was clear: spiritual maturity from the exposition of Christian

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 358.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 359.

doctrine. And the method was clear: preaching and teaching. Another reformer, Calvin, affirmed this:

We see that though God could easily make his people perfect in a single moment, yet it was not his will that they should grow to mature age, but under the education of the Church. We see the means expressed; the preaching of the heavenly doctrine is assigned to the pastors.<sup>11</sup>

The reformers sought to communicate sound theology to all.

One of the offshoots of the Reformation was the reexamination of the Mass and subsequent development of the Lutheran service. The Lutheran Church was not intended to be a new creation but "a reformation and purification of the historic church."<sup>12</sup> But a division gradually took place. Luther's view on the importance of preaching took time to integrate with the Mass. "He did not as yet make the sermon a regular part of the Mass but provided separate daily preaching services."<sup>13</sup> The reason for this was because Luther "dreaded the possibility that a new type of service might be regarded as the symbol of a party or of a personal following."<sup>14</sup> Thus Luther chose to "reform the Mass and not to substitute a new service for it."<sup>15</sup> This

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<sup>11</sup>John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1936), II, p. 274.

<sup>12</sup>Luther D. Reed, The Lutheran Liturgy (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 67.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

all led to the Formula Missae, which "was Luther's greatest liturgical writing."<sup>16</sup> The result of Luther's view on the importance of the Word led to a liturgy and service which was more closely based upon Scripture. For example, the sermon was eventually integrated with the service, both elements of the Lord's Supper were offered to the people, etc.

Luther's intention was to get the Church back in line with the Biblical patterns as far as possible. Part of this effort was the reformation of pastoral priorities. The Roman Church's practice was to make the central sacrament the single priority of the priests. Unfortunately the Word of God was relegated to a secondary position. Luther believed it should be the other way around. He went so far as to state that preaching the Word is the highest office of all the tasks of the ministry, and from it all other tasks of the ministry depend and follow--including priestly tasks. We can see his line of thinking in the following passage:

where there is no office of preaching, none of the others can follow. For John says, John 4 (:2), that Jesus did not baptize, he only preached. And Paul boasts, I Corinthians 1 (:17), that he was not sent to baptize but to preach.

Therefore, whoever has the office of preaching imposed on him has the highest office in Christendom imposed on him. Afterward he may also baptize, celebrate mass, and exercise all pastoral care;

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

or, if he does not wish to do so, he may confine himself to preaching and leave baptizing and other lower offices to others--as Christ and all the apostles did, Acts 4 (6:4).<sup>17</sup>

The reason Luther affirmed the office of preaching in this case was the authority of example--both Jesus and Paul preached. It was one task that was central to their ministry and not entirely delegated.

Luther believed that a minister's function as an ordained individual was valid as long as the priority of his ministry was the Word, not just ceremony. He certainly did not mean to degrade the importance of the sacraments. For example, he thought the Eucharist was extremely important:

let it be understood that people who abstain and absent themselves from the sacrament over a long period of time are not to be considered Christians. Christ did not institute it to be treated merely as a spectacle, but commanded his Christians to eat and drink and thereby remember him.<sup>18</sup>

Another prominent reformer, Calvin, wrote that the true marks of the Church are its preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments.<sup>19</sup> So the reformers supported both the sacraments and the preaching of the Word. It must be said that the sacraments are a type of

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<sup>17</sup>Luther, Works, XXXIX, 314.

<sup>18</sup>Luther, "Large Catechism," in Tappert, p. 451.

<sup>19</sup>Calvin, II, 282.

ministry of the Word. As Luther wrote in his Large Catechism:

As we said of Baptism that it is not mere water, so we say here that the sacrament is bread and wine, but not mere bread or wine such as is served at the table. It is bread and wine comprehended in God's Word and connected with it.<sup>20</sup>

This is another reason why Luther stressed the importance of the Word, since without it the sacraments were mere physical things--water, wine, and bread.

We have seen that the Reformation stressed the priority of preaching the Word. Who was to do this preaching? Luther believed that all Christians were equally priests, but for the sake of order, some persons should be ordained as public "priests" or ministers. The functions and common rights of all believers are the same in time of emergency, however the ordained minister performs certain functions of the ministry publicly. Thus:

It is of the common rights of Christians that we have been speaking. . . . But the community rights demand that one, or as many as the community chooses, shall be chosen or approved who, in the name of all with these rights, shall perform these functions publicly. Otherwise, there might be shameful confusion among the people of God, and a kind of Babylon in the church, where everything should be done in order, as the Apostle teaches (I Cor. 14:40). For it is one thing to exercise a right publicly: another to use it in time of emergency. Publicly one may not exercise a right without consent of the whole body or of the church. In time of emergency each may use it as he

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<sup>20</sup>Luther, "Large Catechism," in Tappert, p. 447.

deems best.<sup>21</sup>

So preaching was normally the task of the pastor.

To sum up, Luther believed that preaching and teaching the Gospel are priorities of the parish ministry. Indeed, they are the signs of a Christian congregation:

it is necessary to know where and what the Christian congregation is, so that men do not engage in human affairs (as the non-Christians were accustomed to do) in the name of the Christian congregation. The sure mark by which the Christian congregation can be recognized is that the pure gospel is preached there. . . . where the gospel is absent and human teachings rule, there no Christians live but only pagans, no matter how numerous they are and how holy and upright their life may be.<sup>22</sup>

The Christian Gospel for Luther is the "sure mark" of the Christian congregation and the foundation of all of the types of pastoral tasks.

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<sup>21</sup>Luther, Works, XL, 34.

<sup>22</sup>Luther, Works, XXXIX, 305.

## Chapter IV

## PASTORAL PRIORITIES AND TODAY

After the previous look into the Reformation and its understanding of pastoral priorities, we must bring our attention to the problem of pastoral priorities today. There always seems to be a struggle to come to terms with this problem of pastoral priorities. Whether this problem is seen in such epoch-making events as the Reformation, or in today's pastoral style of "management by crisis," it is widespread and continuing. One reason for this is that to some extent, pastoral priorities are always in a state of flux. Times change and people change, and since service to God is through service to people, that service has to accommodate the everchanging uniqueness of people. Yet at the same time, certain tasks never change throughout history. These are the priorities that this project deals with primarily. The assumption of this project is that if these constant priorities in the parish ministry are kept in mind and the pastor is committed to them, the result is a solid foundation for a balanced ministry. And there are fewer problems for the pastor.

Another writer has suggested the same idea.

H. Richard Niebuhr in his excellent study, The Purpose of the Church and its Ministry, says this:

the great sense of pressure under which these men work may be due to failure to define what is important and unimportant in a minister's work. The minister who knows what he is doing, they say, is able to resist the many pressures to which he is subject from lay groups in the churches, from the society, from denominational headquarters, and from within himself, however hard he must fight to keep his ship on its course; but the man who has no such determinative principle falls victim to the forces of all the winds and waves that strike upon him.<sup>1</sup>

Niebuhr rightly suggests that if a minister has a sense of the priorities of the ministry, some of the role problems can be minimized. His conclusion supports the assumption of this project.

Guidance for determining pastoral priorities was given to a certain extent in the chapter on the Bible's understanding of priorities. And there must be continual effort to re-evaluate our ministry in light of the Bible since each new generation faces a new problem of hermeneutics--trying to understand what the Bible is saying to us. In addition to the Biblical record, there is the activity of the Holy Spirit. Both of these help guide the pastor. And this is not to ignore the importance of the Church, to which the ministry of the Holy Spirit is given. A pastor is not an island in the mainstream of Christianity. "The church alone is called the body of Christ, which Christ

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<sup>1</sup>H.R. Niebuhr, The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1965), p. 54.



renews, consecrates, and governs by his Spirit . . . ." <sup>2</sup>

A pastor operates within the body of Christ, the Church.

A pastor as individual is only part of the picture. Problems come when a pastor becomes uncoordinated and tries to work independently. The minister must be coordinated with the body of Christ, the Church--in guiding and being guided. And pastors, no less than parishioners, are the beneficiaries of the guidance of the Church, to which God has entrusted His Spirit. So in sum, the major sources that guide a pastor are the Bible and the Church, through which the Holy Spirit ministers.

All of this discussion about the problems of determining pastoral priorities would be vague and academic without some concrete suggestions for carrying them out. But practical applications cannot be considered without an adequate theological base. That has been provided. What it gets down to is this: how can these pastoral priority problems be dealt with? The remainder of the chapter deals with suggestions and possible solutions for correcting these problems. Rather than making this merely a "how to" chapter which would be rather boring, I would like to approach the problem of pastoral priorities from the negative side. That is, how do we deal with the common

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<sup>2</sup>Philip Melanchthon, "Apology of the Augsburg Confession," in Theodore G. Tappert (ed.) The Book of Concord, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 169.

illnesses of the ministry? The best preventive medicine is to be aware of common illnesses. Therefore what follows are some of the incorrect ways that a minister can maladapt, with the hope that with the help of God we can prevent such responses.

Let me begin with my own experience. I know that when I am overwhelmed with activities in my ministry there have been several wrong ways to readjust the priorities--like overspecializing in some areas of ministry to the neglect of other necessary tasks, doing too much on my own without delegating, overworking to the detriment of family and friends, thinking of quitting the ministry since one cannot handle all the demands, etc. These are some of the common and inadequate ways of handling pastoral ministry problems. The solution is certainly not easy or magical. But with the help of God, one is better prepared knowing what the blind alleys of the ministry are. And once these dead ends are charted out one can steer clear of them and concentrate on a balanced ministry. For a balanced ministry is after all the aim of this project.

The first inadequate solution for the minister to make is to overspecialize in the tasks that he or she performs. Pastors are human and seek to limit role stress by concentrating in some task of the ministry. But it is dangerous to think of a pastor's function in some narrow area no matter how valuable it may be, to the detriment of

other areas of ministry. This statement does not contradict the thesis of this paper, which is that the priority of the parish minister is the preaching-teaching function. This priority must be seen in the larger context of the ministry as a whole. For how can preaching and teaching be made relevant to the people of a congregation, how can the hermeneutic process be carried out unless the pastor keeps in touch with the people? This means calling, counseling, etc. are important.

The thesis of this project has sought to show that preaching and teaching are the priorities of the ministry. But even they can be overdone. For example, the Reformation ushered in an age when preaching and teaching were often overemphasized to the detriment of other tasks and priorities. As Luther Reed writes:

When, nearly three centuries after the Reformation, a rationalistic theology exalted the preacher and the Sermon to undue prominence and made them the center and sum of all worship, the church lost all sense of reverence and mystery, of order and beauty, and of historic continuity. The church soon languished in spiritual poverty and impotence.<sup>3</sup>

Preaching and teaching need other tasks of the ministry to round them out. For example, administration is an extension of preaching and teaching in that it is absolutely needed in the follow-up and actualization of what is

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<sup>3</sup>Luther D. Reed, The Lutheran Liturgy (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 307.

preached and taught:

It is one thing for the minister to preach an inspiring sermon on social justice: it is the same preacher as artful administrator who is able to organize his congregation for action, who engages himself on committees and works with organizations, who becomes knowledgeable about laws and legal institutions, who takes time to inform himself about the technical aspects of social changes, and who will in the end find fulfillment in his ministry.<sup>4</sup>

The point is well taken: administration is an extension and fulfillment of the preaching. Likewise calling, counseling, and other tasks of the ministry fulfill the basic priorities of preaching and teaching and therefore must not be neglected, but just kept in proper perspective in relation to the priorities. There must not be over-concentration in any task!

When ministers become overspecialized in one task it is often one of their pet areas of interest. Such is the case in those pastors who concentrate in preaching, counseling, calling, etc. But there is one area of potential overspecialization that many ministers find a hard time avoiding and do not particularly enjoy. This is the area of administration. As Fukuyama writes:

To summarize, much of the disenchantment felt by ministers and theological students with the residential parish church is caused by a conflict between what clergymen think they ought to be doing and what they are actually spending their time doing. Most ministers

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<sup>4</sup>Yoshio Fukuyama, The Ministry in Transition (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1972), p. 73.

see themselves primarily as preachers and pastors: they find themselves functioning for the most part as administrators and organizers.<sup>5</sup>

This problem with administration is widespread and is a serious situation that needs to be considered.

Why is administration frequently a problem? I believe administration is often a priority in practice because it is difficult. Management becomes unmanageable. It often takes more time and effort than we want to give it:

Administrative work is the bane of ministry, by most accounts. It is, as ministers often see it, the unwelcome and unmanageable burden they carry that retards the progress of their ministry as they want to pursue it. Ministers report themselves caught in administrative work when they want to be in ministry.<sup>6</sup>

The key thing that needs to be stressed about James Dittes' remark in Fukuyama's study is the unmanageableness of management. The ability to manage well does not come easy--it is very difficult in fact. Like good teaching and preaching it takes time to learn. Unlike other tasks of the ministry, management can easily and frequently overwhelm a minister and become unmanageable--to the detriment of the priorities of the ministry. This is when the day to day "crises" rob a minister from spending proper attention to the priorities. As an illustration of this problem, Andrew Blackwood makes this observation concerning a young

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

pastor:

Three years later, when the young man takes stock, he discovers that the study has become an office, with telephone jingling and people knocking at the door. Month after month he finds more and more difficulty in getting sixty consecutive minutes for thought in the spirit of prayer. Half or more of each morning he must devote to matters of business detail. In like manner pastoral work suffers because he must keep adjusting and repairing church machinery. In the pulpit on the Lord's Day, feeling jaded and nervous, he preaches and prays as well as he can, with all that inner tension.<sup>7</sup>

This may be an overly dark picture, but it is partly true. Unfortunately, management often becomes the top priority in practice.

Most ministers, as the surveys show, believe that management is not the most important task in the ministry, yet it often becomes a major priority in practice. What are the solutions to this problem of overspecialization? Andrew Blackwood offers some outstanding principles for the management of management.

The young leader . . . needs to know these basic principles. He can find them in the Book, and that in a simple form. In Ex. 18:13-27 is the record of how Moses learned from his father-in-law what the young pastor ought to learn . . . . The words from Jethro suggest the following observations:

1. Many a pastor today has no broad plan for the field.
2. He does not seek advice from men who excel in his line.
3. He tries to do everything himself, as though he alone knew.
4. He consumes time and energy on details. No statesman!

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<sup>7</sup> Andrew Watterson Blackwood, Pastoral Leadership (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949), p. 29.

5. He lives on his nerves, and gets on other people's nerves.
6. He does not delegate responsibility to his teammates.
7. He does not discover and enlist new leaders.
8. He does not let strong men work in their own ways.
9. He does not inspire loyalty to the Kingdom.
10. He does not gain a reputation for knowing how to lead.<sup>8</sup>

The Bible's picture of Moses gives us today an excellent example of how to manage management. That is not all.

Perhaps the best example from the Bible on the art of managing management comes from one of the most practical and theologically astute of persons: Paul. In the example of the Church at Corinth, the people failed in every way. Yet Paul did have faith in them, he trusted that with the grace of God and a considerable amount of confrontation and teaching they could return to sound Christian life. Paul risked. This allowed people to learn. So a key to Paul's management style was trust.

Modern management theory also affirms this need for trust. For example,

Many managers claim that their subordinates are unwilling or not competent to accept the authority delegated to them. However, a subordinate's apparent refusal to accept authority may be the result, not of lack of confidence in his own competence, but of the superior's attitude.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>9</sup>Alan C. Filley and Robert J. House, Managerial Process and Organizational Behavior (Chicago: Scott, Foresman, 1969), p. 240.

Without trust, the pastor assumes too much of what others can and want to be doing. This is what is known as reverse-delegation and is all too common in churches. This was Moses' problem. When this happens it may indicate two things: there has not been enough teaching to enable the parishioners to do their tasks. Or another way to look at it, the pastor does not have sufficient faith in the parishioner's abilities. The pastor must risk. If the parishioners then fail there results an excellent learning opportunity. Which goes back to the first point. A pastor will have faith in the parishioners when they are adequately taught and trained. This happens when a pastor correctly understands the priority to preach and teach so that others may be enabled to do the work of the ministry. To illustrate:

Paul operated by a great principle, one that every serious revolutionary pastor should recognize. The real revolutionary does not try to be a big, splashy prima donna, getting all the headlines. If a revolutionary pastor really wants to change his community and his church, he gets busy at the job of teaching. He trains others to be revolutionaries. Thus, instead of there being only one revolutionary working in the community, there are 20 . . . 50 . . . 150 . . . 400 . . . spreading out into the community in a coordinated approach, prepared, with clear-cut goals. And when a pastor has done that, he has already changed the world.

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<sup>10</sup>Robert C. Linthicum, Christian Revolution for Church Renewal (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), p. 107.



There are vast untouched resources in congregations and tremendous untapped energy in parishioners. Good management must make use of these people by building them up and turning them loose. This involves trust, and risk. The rewards however are great. When parishioners are taught and trusted, they learn. I have found a good many people are frustrated because they cannot learn more and do more in a church! Not to make use of people's vast energy is to frustrate them which in turn voids their need to learn, and to continue to grow and serve. It is also bad management.

Another area of possible overspecialization in the pastoral roles is that of social action. Now social action and more generally, prophetic preaching are essential in the life of the church. To limit the purpose of preaching to evangelism, or to limit the purpose of the church and its ministry only to "saving souls" would be to deny a larger part of the Bible and the ministry of Jesus Christ. Prophecy forms a significant portion of the Old Testament and indeed, Jesus was the last and final prophet. So evangelism and prophecy are inseparable in the Bible, just as preachers today have the responsibility to evangelize and transmit Jesus' prophetic demands on people in later generations. The problem comes when ministers concentrate on social action to the detriment of other priorities. Laypeople are not interested in social action at the

expense of the Gospel! As Johnson and Cornell discovered in their study:

In short, it's a matter of priorities. The people don't want involvement with social concerns to detract from forthright cultivation of the Gospel and its application to personal growth and orientation in life. . . . It's the inadequacy of dealing with the first concern that chiefly turns people off, and not, as the clergy tend to imagine, dealing with the second.  
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If a pastor pays attention to the priorities of the ministry, there is less difficulty getting people interested in social action. And that is the goal since "The entire church bears an apostolic commission as God's prophetic community."<sup>12</sup> It is not the pastor's job alone.

It is better to view the pastor as a social activator rather than a social activist. That is, the leader leads. This does not imply that the pastor need not become involved personally in social action--the best leaders lead through example. But there must be realistic limits to this involvement. As Robert Linthicum observes:

One of the strongest temptations a pastor faces when he decides to be socially responsible is to become intensely involved in as many activist organizations as possible. The result is usually twofold: he becomes overcommitted and consequently does superficial work: he acts independently of the congregation, and consequently does not bring them along. This is a cardinal

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<sup>11</sup>Douglas W. Johnson and George W. Cornell, Punctured Preconceptions (New York: Friendship Press, 1972), p. 34.

<sup>12</sup>Ronald E. Osborn, In Christ's Place (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1967), p. 97.

offense because it does not achieve that end the pastor desires--the creation of a new society and the transformation of his congregation into a movement.

The revolutionary pastor must be a teacher. His task is not to burst out into the world, sprint far ahead of the congregation, and then urge them to catch up.<sup>13</sup>

In short, the pastor teaches and leads by example (without overspecialization). This is essential to a good social action program and a balanced ministry.

A final area of possible overspecialization is that of pastoral counseling. It is inadequate for the minister to view ministry primarily as pastoral counseling, as Niebuhr observed in his study on ministry:

Those who suggest that the ministry should provide for its continuation by turning itself into a kind of social or counseling service ignore the nature of the ministry and really provide for its discontinuation.<sup>14</sup>

Of course this does not apply to churches supporting multiple ministers who often specialize. But that demands that their collective ministry be balanced. Sometimes a specially trained minister is hired for this one purpose. And pastoral counseling is certainly a valuable part of service to humanity. But it must be kept in perspective with other valuable tasks.

To summarize this section on over-specialization, we have seen that a pastor must avoid any single task that would unbalance the total ministry in a church. All of

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<sup>13</sup>Linthicum, p. 105. <sup>14</sup>Niebuhr, p. 57.

the tasks in the parish ministry are interdependent and important. Some tasks will take more time and energy than others. Some tasks may be partially or wholly delegated. But the main thing is that the whole church work together, each member of the body of Christ doing its task for the good of our Lord's Church. No one member should have to overcompensate for another member. When a pastor equips the saints to do the work of the ministry with the help of God, there should be no need for the pastor to overspecialize and overwork.

This brings us to the last major form of problems with pastoral priorities--that of overwork. Overwork is the "logical" choice for the minister that has too many tasks to do. At first glance it seems to be the best answer, but overwork has a lot of detrimental effects. Ignore for the moment the possible bad side effects on a pastor's family, mental health, priorities, etc. Let us instead look in the area of human efficiency. Many ministers are very gifted persons and certainly able to work long hours without jeopardy. And it is a tribute to their dedication to serving God and humans when they spend huge sums of time in their ministry. Yet research indicates that there is a threshold of hours per week a minister can work beyond which more work will drastically decrease efficiency. Here is what an expert in the field of management has to say about overwork:

Executives who consistently devote more than 45 to 55 hours a week to their jobs are in serious danger of impairing their efficiency. Several studies have established that productivity declines rapidly after eight hours of work. Long hours also encourage executives to adopt the attitude that there is no great press to get something done because "There is always tonight." Thus what could be done in eight hours often stretches out to 10 or 12. This work habit, according to Charles Ford, can spread through an entire organization.<sup>15</sup>

Mr. Mackenzie is saying a number of very important things here. First, overwork is just plain inefficient. Secondly, overwork encourages the myth that one has unlimited time to accomplish goals and therefore there is no pressure to get things done now. The last thing that needs to be said about the statement by Mr. Mackenzie is that this attitude of doing ministry as if there were always a tomorrow spreads to the whole organization. The repercussions are profound and grave for the Church. The solution is clear. A pastor definitely has an influence on how a whole church does its ministry. And since I believe that the best pastoral leadership is accomplished through example, it is critical that a minister "redeem the time." One must not be hasty or premature, but one must also not be sluggard.

Another problem with overworking is that it frequently infringes on the time needed with the family

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<sup>15</sup>R. Alec Mackenzie, The Time Trap (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), p. 10.

(assuming there is one). In my observation, this is a common area that a pastor will sacrifice. Yet I think that this would not be so if ministers were aware of how important the family is. There is good sociological evidence to support this view:

A study by Joseph Trickett of successful and unsuccessful executives indicates that a characteristic of failing executives is their readiness to sacrifice their family lives to their occupational lives. In general a neglect of the family and an overemphasis on the job at the expense of the marriage will eventually lower job performance.<sup>16</sup>

The leadership example of a strong family is well worth the time spent even if the result is less time for ministry outside of the family.

One thing I do not wish to imply is that if the minister has less time to work, then he or she should "pour it on" and sweat all the harder in the available amount of time. This doesn't work either!

One of the myths of time management is that the harder one works, the more he gets done. Robert Pearce, of Boston University, has labeled this the "buckets-of-sweat syndrome." No direct relationship can be assumed between hard work and positive accomplishment. The adage "Work smarter, not harder" has its root in the recognition of the fallacy of this assumption. In fact, a manager getting little done may well attempt to offset his ineffectiveness by appearing to work hard. Results are seldom, says Pearce, proportional to the buckets of sweat generated. If every hour spent in effective planning saves three to four in execution and insures better results, managers would do well not to permit work to start until it has been carefully thought through. While planning requires

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

time, in the end it saves time and gets better results.  
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For the parish minister, the answer to a limited amount of time is not overwork or worrying harder, but planning. And this is what this whole project is about!

When a parish minister correctly understands his or her tasks within the perspective of the body of Christ, he or she must necessarily plan to actualize the pastoral priorities. As such, planning becomes a fundamental task for the parish minister. Ideally, the tasks of the parish minister should be a well planned whole. For a minister must plan well in order to have enough time for study and preparation for preaching and teaching, time for calling, etc. This is only possible when all tasks are seen with a view of their priority and utilized for the best possible service of God and humans, within the framework of the body of Christ.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp.10-11.

## Chapter V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This project has been divided into three main divisions: Part One dealt with the Biblical basis for the priorities of the ministry. Part Two dealt with the pastoral priority differences during the Reformation. Part Three dealt with priority problems in the parish today with suggestions for dealing with those problems. The fundamental assumption for this study is that if the priorities of the ministry are known, and methods for actualizing these priorities are known, then this planning serves as a basis for actualizing these priorities. The central priority of the parish minister is the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. Without this a church is not a church and cannot be distinguished from a country club, Y.M.C.A., or social action-counseling center. The Word of God is the single thing that all of the tasks of the ministry depend.

Jesus is the Word of God. Preaching the Word is an event which is necessary in the making of disciples. And Mark 16:15 records Jesus' command of his disciples to go and proclaim the gospel to all. The gospel is the subject which is preached as a minimum, it is also all that is needed for salvation. All Christians must evangelize by proclaiming the gospel in order to carry out the great



commission of Christ. And lastly, preaching must be carried out with a sense of urgency.

Teaching is inseparable from preaching, both in the Bible and in practice today. Strictly speaking, the goal of teaching is the building up of the church, whereas preaching's goal is to produce faith in the hearers. Both supplement each other. Thorough preparation is needed to teach the Word which is required for the building up of the saints so that they "digest" the more solid food rather than simply "milk." Teaching forms the lion's share of the NT and is necessary for the building up of the saints so that they do not stray from the faith with every new wind of human doctrine. As such, teaching is a priority for the parish minister, for the equipment of the saints which in turn prepares them for the work of the ministry.

The pastor is part of the body of Christ and has certain functions within it for the benefit of the Church. The priorities of the pastor are dependent on a strong balanced ministry of all the members of the Church. General tasks for the pastor which depend on the priority of the Word include priestly activity, management, and shepherding. While it is true that all Christians are priests to one another, for the sake of order in the church certain ordained individuals are chosen for public preaching and the administration of certain priestly tasks. Another task is management. Management is best partially

delegated. Also, the parish minister must be a good manager of the home and family in order to manage a church. Lastly, shepherding is the function of interpersonal relations such as calling, counseling, etc. And most importantly, shepherding includes service to people which is how Christians serve God. That concludes Part One.

The Reformation was a period in which pastoral priorities can be compared and contrasted. The Reformation position is remembered for its emphasis on preaching the Word of God whereas the Roman Church is remembered for its emphasis on the priestly functions. Martin Luther's effort was to reaffirm the priority of preaching the Word, which formed the basis for other tasks of the ministry--among them priestly tasks. His reasons for affirming the importance of the Word were due to his personal spiritual problems, scholarly background, and theology. Luther's position reaffirms the thesis of this paper which is that teaching and preaching are the priorities of the parish ministry--which make a congregation a Christian church.

The last major part of the project dealt with pastoral priorities and today. It was pointed out that planning the priorities of the ministry is helpful in their actualization. The sources which guide a pastor today in the planning of pastoral priorities are the Bible and the Holy Spirit which ministers through the Church.

Pastoral problems with priorities were dealt with.

It was emphasized that the ministry must be conceived as a whole and not just some specific tasks no matter how valuable they are in themselves. Therefore the minister must not limit role stress by overconcentrating in one area of ministry such as management, counseling, or even preaching. Management can be managed by planning and delegation. Trust is essential in the process of training the saints to do the work of the ministry. Another problem area is overconcentration in the area of social action on the part of the minister. If a pastor pays attention to the priorities of preaching and teaching the Word, then people are more likely to accept social action as a corollary of the Word, and not the other way around. In general, a pastor must not become overextended in any single task which would lead to an unbalanced ministry.

The last general pastoral priority problem is that of overwork. Studies confirm that efficiency greatly declines after a certain point. To overstep this limit is to invite inefficiency, a feeling that there is always tomorrow to finish, and neglect of self and family ministry. It is a questionable example for the rest of the church, especially if the family is neglected. One possible solution to the dilemma of overwork is planning. Studying pastoral priorities is a form of planning. This planning is a fundamental task for actualizing the pastoral priorities as the pastor fits into the larger ministry of

the Church.

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